

Paxcroft Primary School

Ashton Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 7EB

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- From low starting points, pupils make good progress through each year and most reach the expected standards by the end of Year 6.
- Lively teaching, underpinned by an engaging curriculum, captures pupils' interest.
- Pupils get along with one another well. They are eager to learn and they try their best in lessons.
- Parents agree that the school is a safe and enjoyable place to learn.
- Excellent relationships underpin a strong sense of purpose across the school.
- A wide range of sporting, art and musical activities contributes much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, well supported by governors, share a determination to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. Their efforts have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and more consistent progress across the school.
- Improvements in the way pupils' progress is tracked mean that staff are quick to spot any individuals who are falling behind or who need further challenge.
- Governors provide good support. They keep well informed and regularly seek assurance that the needs of different groups of pupils are being met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The ability of leaders and governors to review the school's work and drive improvements is somewhat restricted because the highly detailed assessment information is not summarised in a way that simply and directly addresses the school's key development goals.
- Improvement plans are not specific enough about the intended impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons of which six were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime was also evaluated.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, school leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the support for pupils who need extra help. They examined pupils' work in their books and on classroom and corridor wall displays, and heard pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including plans for the school's future development, lesson plans, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including those expressed in the 76 responses to the online Parent View survey and in discussions with the inspectors at the beginning of the school day.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at 20 returned questionnaires and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Crouch

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size. Most pupils have a White British heritage. Around 10% are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and half of these students speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, is average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after, children of parents serving in the armed forces and for those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is around the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These needs relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or speech, language and communication problems.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- After the Reception year, classes are mixed age: Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve self-review and development planning by:
 - using assessment data more effectively to provide an overview of pupils' progress that can be readily understood
 - ensuring all sections of the school development plan include measurable targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter Reception their social, language and number skills are generally below those typical for their age. They make good progress through the year, although the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is typically below average, particularly in early reading and writing skills.
- From these low starting points at the beginning of Year 1, pupils make good progress and reach broadly average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6. There was a dip in 2012 due to the particular characteristics of the year group, but current pupils are building well on their various starting points.
- Children in Year 1 gain increasing confidence in reading unfamiliar words due to the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Pupils reached average levels in the phonics screening check last year and Year 1 pupils are on track to reach at least the expected levels this year.
- The rate of progress in writing is speeding up. This is evident, for example, when comparing the quality of written work by current pupils in Years 3 and 4 with that of previous pupils in these year groups.
- By Year 6, pupils generally reach the expected standards in reading and writing, with an average proportion reaching higher levels. During a reading lesson in a Years 5 and 6 class, all pupils were keen to read. The more able pupils demonstrated secure levels of comprehension and an ability to 'read between the lines' to delve into inferential aspects of the texts.
- Pupils become increasingly confident and accurate in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and older pupils routinely use these skills in their day-to-day written work. Their use of technical expressions, such as 'subordinate clause' when evaluating their own work, reflects the strong emphasis placed on these skills.
- A renewed emphasis on teaching basic skills through using practical apparatus is paying dividends. After using number rods, for example, pupils in Year 1 quickly spotted the increasing and decreasing sequences in number pairs that made 10 (for example, 9+1, 8+2, 7+3).
- Recently, pupils in Year 6 did not do as well in mathematics as in reading and writing. This led to a revamp of the curriculum and further training for teachers, and pupils are generally back on track. For example, the majority of pupils in Year 6 confidently tackle a wide range of mathematical activities, including calculating equivalent fractions and decimals, and drawing line graphs to interpret algebraic expressions
- The school's determination to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed is evident in the way different groups are supported and in the progress they make.
- Pupils receiving additional help due to their disabilities or special educational needs make good progress due to effective support, both within lessons and during small-group sessions.
- The rate of progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals varies across each year group and there is no pattern regarding reading, writing or mathematics. Over half of these pupils have additional needs and a few are among the higher achievers. The big picture is that, for the most part, the school is gradually narrowing the gap between the progress of this group and the other pupils. In most year groups, current gaps in attainment are broadly equivalent to two terms of progress.
- There were very few pupils who were supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 so it is not possible to comment on their attainment compared to others. There are no particular trends in the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups and these pupils all achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Children in the Reception classes develop a love of learning and enthusiastically join in the good

range of activities available both indoors and outside.

- Pupils show very positive, mature attitudes to learning as they choose from 'mild', 'hot' and 'spicy' tasks and sustain their concentration. They move swiftly on to more challenging work if they find their original task too easy.
- Good learning in literacy and numeracy is promoted successfully. Pupils try their best, with most making good efforts to present their work neatly. They show pride in their joined handwriting and the neatness of the mathematics work books helps them to calculate accurately.
- Pupils are kept on their toes and they sustain their interest and engagement in learning. Pupils of different ages in the same class are set work that builds on their starting points so they do not cover old ground or find the work too demanding. Younger pupils often benefit from working alongside their older classmates.
- Marking provides useful pointers for improvement. Pupils say they appreciate the time at the beginning of lessons for them to reflect on their teachers' comments, rather than plough on immediately with new work. Pupils rise to the expectation that they complete their work in class within the allotted time and they make good efforts to complete homework tasks.
- When all pupils in the class are given a similar task, such as writing a poem, teachers often elicit their ideas about 'what makes good work'. This gives pupils, including the more able, something specific to aim for. Pupils say they enjoy marking their own and one another's work because it helps to see how to improve.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning within class lessons and when leading small groups. They are particularly effective in encouraging and helping pupils who need additional support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to please. Their prompt responses, mature approach to working in groups and pairs, and ability to work independently, enhance pupils' learning and contribute to their good progress.
- Pupils believe that behaviour is good, and that children are happy and kind to one another. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Rewards and sanctions are consistent and understood by all staff. Pupils like the system of rewards and feel it helps them try hard to do better. Parents are highly positive about behaviour.
- Levels of attendance are consistently above average and persistent absence is comparatively low. The school is well aware of the few families who need support to ensure good levels of attendance, and a variety of strategies is used to help achieve this goal.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe and parents are entirely confident that their children are looked after well. Bullying is not considered to be an issue by pupils, staff or parents, and school records confirm these views are accurate. Any minor squabbles or unkindness are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the community and at school, and how to avoid potential hazards when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- An overarching sense of purpose, team spirit and commitment, promoted by senior, middle and subject leaders, is evident across the school. All leaders have been well supported in their roles and have been successful in leading improvements in their areas.
- A rigorous approach to gathering and using information about pupils' progress has generated a wealth of assessment data. Leaders are aware that the great level of detail about individual pupils, although helpful in setting individual targets, does not always provide a succinct overview for the purposes of self-evaluation. One remarked, 'Perhaps we can't see the wood for the trees.'

- Regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement enable leaders to set relevant whole-school targets for improvement and to devise plans on how to achieve them. Because the targets are not explicit about the intended outcome for example, 'raise standards in mathematics', the ability of leaders and governors to fully evaluate the impact of the initiatives is constrained.
- The curriculum is imaginatively designed. The themed approach to learning draws productively on teachers' subject knowledge and their expertise in weaving the progressive acquisition of essential skills into engaging topics. For example, during a study of Borneo, older pupils explored the tension between the need for palm oil plantations and the preservation of the orang-utan habitat. They designed their own fundraising activities, adopted an orang-utan orphan and created a presentation for the Mayor before performing *The Jungle Book*.
- Many further enrichment experiences are provided for all ages. For example, the Key Stage 2 Choir took part in the Young Voices Festival at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. The choirs and instrumentalists perform regularly within school and outside, and all pupils perform in musical drama productions each year. Many pupils compete very successfully in a wide range of sporting activities. Additional funding for sports is being spent wisely to further enhance teachers' skills and increase the already high participation rates.
- The local authority provides light touch support, at times drawing on the expertise of Paxcroft staff to lead training in the local school network.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In addition to providing a useful sounding board for senior leaders, they take the initiative and ask insightful questions. For example, the Chair of the Governing Body recently suggested a modification to the way minutes of meetings were recorded to provide a sharper focus on pupils' achievement. Governors know how well pupils are doing in the assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 and in the phonics screening check in Year 1. They understand how the school's results compare to those of pupils in other schools nationally. They know how good the quality of teaching is. They support school leaders in ensuring that good teaching is suitably rewarded and know what support has been provided to improve teaching and address underperformance in the past. They take care to explore how effectively pupil premium funding and additional money for sports are being used. Governors, several of whom have been recently appointed, participate in regular training and keep their effectiveness under review through an annual evaluation. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126483
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	441073

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Ranger
Headteacher	Ewan Caldwell
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 March 2011
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